

An Enquiry into the Question^{1174 B. II.}

Where the SWALLOW, the NIGHTINGALE, the WOODCOCK, the FIELDFARE, STORK, and other Birds of Passage reside, when Absent from us.

IF any one should esteem this Enquiry as a Thing of little or no Consequence, it may be answered, that there are many Things in Nature very inconsiderable in themselves, and yet are of great Importance, when their Use and End come to be better known.——For Example

One would admire why Eclipses should take up so much the Consideration of Astrologers, since an Eclipse in it self is a meer Nothing, only a *Privation*, only a *Shadow* of very short durance, and no more in reality, than a Man's putting his Hand between his Eye and the Candle :

And yet this little *Privation*, this mere *Non Entity*, this little *Shadow*, and short *Darkness*, gives the greatest Lights to *Astronomy*, to measure and comprehend at such a Distance the vast *Magnitudes* and *Motions* of the *Heavenly Orbs*. This being premised, we'll proceed in our Enquiry as follows :

The *System* of *Copernicus* being now the most generally received as true, *viz.* That the *Moon's Body* (as also the other *free Planets*) is of a *Composition* like our Earth, but not so big,

And consequently has in it *Land* and *Water*, *Mountains* and *Hillies*, *Fields*, *Meadows*, *Woods*, *Groves*, *Rivers*, & *Seas*.

And also that it has about it an *Atmosphere* of *Vapours* and *Fumes* that arise from it, with *Clouds*, *Rain*, *Mists*, *Fogs*, &c. just as is about our Earth, which we here inhabit,

By Consequence has a convenient and sufficient *Habitation* for any *Fowls* that may arrive thither from any of the other *Planets*, in case they do but arrive thither, and which Arrival is the Thing now to be enquired into.

And in which our Enquiry, it shall be established for a Principle, that *That is the most True, which is the easiest deducible from Observation and Experience*. This *System* of *Copernicus* being thus received as to be depended on, an Answer to our present Question may be, *That it is not at all impossible, but highly probable, that the Swallow, the Nightingale, the Woodcock, the Fieldfare, the Redstart, the Stork, and other Fowls of Passage that appear with us only at certain Seasons, do pass and repass between this our World and the Moon, which is the nearest to us of all the Planets*. To prove which we will first consider, that

If these Birds did in the Time of their Absence from us, reside any where in *This our Earth*, at some time or another the Place would have been discovered, which does not at all appear in any History.

There have been indeed Stories of *Swallows* lying in Holes in the *Bottoms* of Rivers; but so improbable, that no reasonable Person can believe cold Water and Earth to be Quarters warm enough for such Summer Creatures.

Others tell us of Heaps of *Swallows* lying in the Cliffs of *Rocks* near the Sea, but scarce any one ever yet spoke with the Person that saw them; And again some curious Person or other inquisitive into the Nature of Things, should have procured some of those *Sleeping Swallows* to have observed the *Progress* of Nature concerning them, which we do not find that any one ever did. The like has been said of *Cuckows* found in the Winter-time in a hollow Tree, but who ever yet saw any Number of them? If any One of these Birds may have been found, it may possibly have happened, as of a *Woodcock* said to have been taken at *Midsummer*, but he was all *Louzy*: This, if true, might be, that perhaps the Creature was sick or wounded at the Time he should have been gone, and so perhaps was left behind his *Companions*.

And indeed it may be wondred at, that no curious Person should have, by Pinioning them, preserved some of these *Fowls*, to see if they would live with us all the Year, or not.

Again, Others tell us of a *Fieldfare* or two found in desolate *Moors* and *Northern Parts*, but what is all this to the Multitudes we have of these and other Birds of Passage in their Seasons which come in such mighty Flocks to us?

And which *Coming* is so sudden, that it is just as if they dropt down upon us from above: In *Woodcocks* especially, 'tis remarkable that upon an Easterly Wind about the End of *October*, they will seem to have come all in one Night:

For tho the Day before *None* were seen, yet next Morning they will appear almost in every Bush especially in the West of *England*, where they are most plentiful.

Nor is it perceived that they are in the Eastern Parts sooner than in the more Western, nor that they fly Westwards when they are raised to the Wing, more than to any other Quarters; whereas if they came from any Easterly Coast, 'tis likely their Tendency to spread themselves farther, would be from those Coasts from whence they came:

They are as it were sprinkled all over a Country in a Night's Time, & where there are Springs whose Steams contribute most to the Attraction of them, they fall the plentifullest.

So that it may very well be supposed that at their first coming, they Hover aloft where the Attraction is weak:

And that when they first come to the outmost Parts of Our Atmosphere, they there Try the Air, to take hold of those Steams that are most agreeable to them, & There they forthwith drop right down. And in the same manner the *Swallows* are also scattered about all in a Nights time.

There

There is an Account of one single Bird that in his Passage rambled too far out of his Way from his *Companions* :

The *Story* is this. — A Ship out at Sea much farther from Land than any Birds used to be found, discovered a Bird aloft in the Air, hovering over them, as high as they could discern ; which Bird descended towards them, & made diverse *Rounds* over the Vessel, and at last lighted on the Deck, & it was a *Woodcock*, so wearied that they took it up with their Hands, and the Master of the Vessel asserted, that it came not from any *Coast*, but *Downright from ABOVE*.

As to the Flying of these Birds, 'tis manifest that those of them that take up their Abode when they come amongst us near the Sea-shoar, do never when disturbed offer towards the Sea, but shelter themselves again as soon as they can on the Land: From whence we may very well conclude that they never came from any Part of *This Earth* that lies beyond *Our Seas*, for they would never venture all at once over any Sea or great Breadth of Water, which they must do, should they come from any Parts beyond *Our Seas* :

All which makes it highly probable that they come only from somewhere ABOVE. As to the *Fieldfare* also, 'tis observed the same as of the *Woodcock*, that they shun the Seas :

Orelse why do they not better shift for themselves in a very cold Season, by getting over to *France*, *Spain*, or other warmer Countries, rather than starve here, as Multitudes of them do in deep Snows and excessive hard Frosts.

From whence it plainly appears that they are no *Beyond-Sea Birds*, nor never came into this Island from any other Part of *This Our Earth*, but that they come down directly upon us when our Climate agrees to them as they view and perceive it above in the Outside of *Our Atmosphere*.

The *Swallow*, *Cuckow*, *Swift*, *Marten*, *Nightingale*, *Stork*, and other Summer Birds make but very short Flights and always shun the Seas, tho the *Swallow*, the *Swift*, and the *Marten*, sometimes indeed for to take Flies or to Drink, do dip & play over the fresh Waters, but NEVER go far on the Sea, which plainly shews them to be no *Beyond-Sea Birds*.

Again, The *Swallow*, the *Stork*, the *Swift*, & *Martin*, about the Time of their Departure gather together in Flocks, and make a very chearful and chattering Noise before they take their farewell, and Fly very High, but are NEVER seen to take to the Sea : Nor is it probable that they are in any lurking Holes to sleep & hide themselves in :

For then they shou'd be more Dull, Melancholy & Drooping towards their going thus to sleep, whereas their Chearfulness and Singing, rather seems to intimate that they have some great Design and attempt to set upon, and which is to get and soar UP above *Our Atmosphere* : And

And so to Fly away to some other *Earthy Body*, or *World*, which of all the Planets must be the *Moon*, it being the nearest to them, and *First* other World they can arrive at.

But there is one Observation, which seems fully to prove the present Opinion, and that is, the Proceeding of the *Stork*, a plentiful Bird every Summer in *Holland*, breeding on the Tops of most of the Chimneys in all the Towns there.

These Birds when they have bred, and their Young fully fledg'd, about the End of September when the Time of their Departure draws nigh, they all of them to a Bird (as is so well and yearly known to the Inhabitants, that no Notice is taken of them, but they pass as yearly Visitors coming and going) gather together in a great spacious moorish fenny Place near *Amsterdam*, called *Haerlem-Meer* :

The *Storks* being all here gathered together, they continue some Days making a very chattering Noise to call one another, till the last of them is come into their Rendezvous :

Then, in the midst of this Noise there is a sudden Silence for a short Time, after which they ALL rise together, & Fly in one Flock or Cloud so great, that they cover at their Rising even the Earth, & in a manner darken the very Sky :

Being risen from the Ground, they fetch several great Rounds and Circles, soaring higher, and higher, till at last this great Cloud of Birds that at first covered the Surface of the Earth, and darkened the very Sky right over the Place of their Ascent, appears less and less by Degrees, as they Soar more and more away, & on high right strait up (which is no manner of Way to any other Part of this Our Earth) till they come to appear no bigger than a Man's Hand, and at last disappear, and are seen no more till the next *April* :

When in a Nights Time, all on a sudden in a Morning every City shall be full of them, tho not one of them was to be seen the Day before, this every Child in *Holland* knows :

All which makes the Probability beyond Dispute of their Dropping DOWN on a sudden from their Winter Quarters the Moon. And what still confirms this Opinion more, is a particular Text in the Prophet *Jeremiah*, ch. 8. ver. 7.

The Stork IN the Heavens knoweth her appointed Times, and the Swallow observes the Time of their coming.

The *Latin* Text has it *Ciconia IN Calis*, The *Stork IN the Heavens* : What we are now to take Notice of is the Difference between the Words *In the Heavens*, and *Of the Heavens*.

Now whenever in the Scripture mention is made of other Birds with relation to the Heavens, 'tis in the latter Expression, and they are always called *Fowls OF the Heavens* :

And only these Fowls of Passage are said to be *IN the Heavens*, when they know their Times of coming to us, which is not said of any other Birds : And

And indeed the Expression *IN the Heavens*, is only ascribed in the *Scripture* to those Things that have a Being quite out of *Our Earth*. Now Fowls that are said to be *OF the Heavens*, are such as fly and wander about only in the Aerial Heavens, to shew their Difference from Animals that can only walk upon the Earth, and therefore are called *Fowls of the Heavens*, or belonging to that Part of *Our Atmosphere up Above* which we commonly and grossly call the Heavens.

But the Expression *IN the Heavens* is something more, viz. a Kind of an Abode for six Months together in something that cannot be called the Air, and therefore must be some solid Heavenly Body, such as the *Moon* is.

The Sum of all which is, that the Stork and the Swallow, are in their Absence said to be *IN the Heavens*, because they are not in any other Part of *THIS OUR Earth*:

And since *IN the Heaven* cannot signifie to be only in the Air, where 'tis impossible for any Creature to reside for six Months together, it remains that these Fowls do go unto, and remain in some one of the Celestial Bodies, which, (as above has been said) must be the *Moon*, as nearest to them, and bearing most Relation to this our Earth, as clearly appears in the *Copernican System*.

As to the Seasons for these Fowls coming, they *KNOW*, as the *Scripture* says, *their appointed Times of Coming to us*, and going from us; so that when these Seasons and Times come, they have an Instinct or implanted Natural Faculty, whereby they take Notice of the Changes of the Air where they are, or the Alteration or Abatement of their daily Food, (as for Example the *Nightingale* and *Swallow* find the Abatement of Flies, & other Insects they live upon about *October*, and begins to be plentiful here in *April*) whereby they are invited to change Quarter, in order to obtain what is more suitable to them, or to avoid what is offensive.

As to the Rarity of the Air, and Distance between the Attraction of this *Our Globe* and that of the *Moon*,

As all *Gravity* or *Weight* is from the *Magnetism* or *Attraction* of the Earth, (without which a Bushel of Lead would not be Heavier than a Handful of Feathers) then, the more remote from the Earth, the less is the Gravity, and by consequence the more Easy the Passage or progressive Motion of the Bird, having no Impediment of intrinsic Gravity or Weight to hinder it. For then the Bird employing none of its Strength to bear up its Weight, it being out of all Attraction between the *Two Atmospheres* of *Our Globe* and the *Moon*, it may use all its *WHOLE* Strength in its Promotion forwards, whither by Instinct it tends.

And again the Air between the *Two Atmospheres* is thin, and makes no manner of Resistance to the Wing: So

So that the whole Strength of the Bird is reserved only for its Progressive Motion, and by Consequence the Bird's Motion in its Passage is infinitely Easier, and Swifter, than the swiftest Motion of any Living Creature in *This our World* can possibly be, & this especially since their whole Journey between the *Two Atmospheres*, viz. of *Our Globe* and that of the *Moon*, is performed without the least Degree of any Manner of Draw-back or Hindrance from any Gravitation, Impediment or Attraction from any Atmosphere, they being in *None*, but in their Journey between *Two Atmospheres* & that their Journey is made quite out of any Atmosphere where there is no manner of Impediment by their own Weight, or Attraction from any other Body, & more by a progressive Instinct forwards, than by any Action of their own, as they act when they move IN an Atmosphere.

Thus a Horse for Example in Running a Race, is hindered by the Impediment of its own Weight, but a Bird has no manner of Weight beyond and out of the Attraction & Atmosphere of either *Our Earth*, or the Body of the *Moon*.

The Horse has the Resistance and Pulsion of the Air, the Bird has no such thick Air to rush and push against *Out of an Atmosphere*. And again, As all Animals are stronger proportionable to their Bulk, the smaller they are.

So a Flea is certainly proportionable to its Bigness the strongest Creature in the whole *World*, as clearly appears by its being able to Move and Throw it self forward, infinitely *More times ITS OWN LENGTH*, than any other living Creature in the *World* whatsoever besides can do:

For if a Horse for Example had Strength enough to throw himself forward at one Push or Jirk as *Many times ITS OWN LENGTH* as every Flea that leaps does,

He would every Motion go near a Quarter of a Mile at Once, as by Arithmetical Proportion of the Horse's Bulk, and a Flea's Bulk clearly appears: Which Motion of a Horse (had he Strength enough to move himself so as a Flea does) would carry him a Mile for every four Times he moves himself, which would amount to several thousand Miles a Day.

From whence 'tis evident, that a Flea is much stronger proportionably to its Bulk, than the strongest Horse in the *World*.

To apply this therefore to our present Purpose; A Swallow or a Nightingale for Example being but very small Birds, are by consequence proportionable to their Bulk, much stronger than vast greater Animals, and by consequence, how infinitely swift may they not move forwards, when being OUT OF ANY Atmosphere & Attraction, they have no manner of Impediment either Intrinsical from their own Weight and Bulk, or Extrinsic from Air, to encounter and push against?

And

And again, we know not how soon these Birds may arrive at, & meet with the *Moon's* Attraction, perhaps sooner than we here imagin, which if so, will very much forward and hasten their Velocity, till they come to their Journeys End.

As for these Birds eating during their Journey, they may very well be without any Food at all during that Time,

Because in that Temper & Quality of Climate between the TWO Atmospheres where they pass, there is not that Nitrous Air to prey upon the Spirits of the Bird, as is here below in our sulphurous thick Air, & by consequence; the Spirits of the Bird not consuming, no Supply of Food is requisite. Nay we see that here below in our gross World, Bears live upon their Summer Fat all the Winter-long in *Greenland*, without any new Supply of Food : Now these Birds being at the Time of their going away, always observed to be very Fat, Corpulent, Sanguine and Succulent, full of Blood and Juices, may by consequence have their Provisions laid up in their very Bodies for the Voiage, whereas they are always Lean & Poor at their first coming down to us.

We may draw a very good Conjecture from the particular Tameness and Familiarity of these Birds at their First coming to us, they being not at all affraid of US, as other Birds that stay with us all the Year are, that they are not destroyed in the Place from whence they come, as they are by us, whereas at their going away they are much more wild.

In the *Philosophical Transactions* for the Year 1720. Mr. *Derham* speaking of the Migration of these Birds, recommends to the R. Society, that they would procure to be observed in all Parts of the Kingdom the very Day the first Approach of these Migratory Birds shou'd be seen or heard.

And to observe how the Winds sit at the same time, especially towards the Sea Coast : By which will easily be perceived whither these Birds come from any other Part of *This Our Earth* or not. The *Swallow* says Mr. *Derham* about the End of *March* makes a great Out-cry at its first coming to us, as if he saw something strange here, from what he saw in the Place from whence he came, which denotes it to be some other World, and a new Region from what it came from.

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